

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 6835

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, SP

SUBJ: BACKGROUND ON OCTOBER 29 CABINET CHANGE

REF: MADRID 6808

1. AIDE TO PRIME MINISTER CARLOS ARIAS NAVARRO HAS GIVEN
POLITICAL COUNSELOR FOLLOWING INSIGHTS ON OCTOBER 29
DISMISSAL OF INFORMATION MINISTER PIO CABANILLAS.

2. RIGHT-WING FORCES MANUEVERED THROUGHOUT SUMMER, PARTICULARLY
DURING FRANCO'S ILLNESS AND RECOVERY, TO PERSUADE FRANCO TO
PURGE CABINET OF LIBERAL ELEMENTS. THESE FORCES, WHICH INCLUDED
SUCH POLITICAL FIGURES AS FORMER INFORMATION MINISTER SANCHEZ
BELLA, FORMER PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER FERNANDEZ DE LA MORA AND
NEWS DIRECTOR EMILIO ROMERO (PUEBLO) AND LUCAS ORIOL (NUEVO
DIARIO) (IN ADDITION TO FORMER LABOR MINISTER JOSE ANTONIO
GIRON AND VETERAN FALANGIST CARLOS PINILLA) COMMUNICATED
DESIRES TO FRANCO THROUGH SEVERAL CONDUITS, IMPORTANT ONE
OF WHICH WAS JOSE UTRERA MOLINA, SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATIONAL
MOVEMENT.

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3. IN PRESSURING FRANCO, THIS GROUP INCREASINGLY IDENTIFIED PIO CABANILLAS AS NUMBER ONE TARGET FOR PURGE. WHILE CABANILLAS WAS RESENTED FOR PERMITTING TENDENTIOUS POLITICAL REPORTING IN PRESS AS WELL AS LEFTIST PROPAGANDA, THERE WAS EQUAL OR GREATER CONCERN OVER INCREASING PUBLICATION OF MATERIAL IN MAGAZINES, FILMS AND PLAYS THAT WAS CONSIDERED PORNOGRAPHIC. REPORTEDLY CONSERVATIVE WOMEN'S GROUPS AND FEMALE ASSOCIATES OF DONA CARMEN POLO DE FRANCO HAD COMPLAINED WITH FREQUENCY TO PRADO PALACE ABOUT OFFENSIVE MATERIAL APPEARING IN PRESS, PLAYS AND MOVIES AND THAT THESE COMPLAINTS HAD REACHED FRANCO THROUGH HIS WIFE. ARIAS HIMSELF WAS APPARENTLY CONCERNED ABOUT EXTREMES TO WHICH PRESS FREEDOM WAS BEING CARRIED, BUT HE NEVER FOUND OPPORTUNITY OR INCLINATION TO EITHER DEFEND CABANILLAS' POLICY WITH FRANCO OR TO SEEK TO PERSUADE CABANILLAS TO BE MORE PRUDENT. SOME CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN EARLIER TO MOVING CABANILLAS TO LESS POLITICALLY EXPOSED MINISTRY OF JUSTICE.

4. SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE CABANILLAS RETURNED FROM MIDDLE EAST TOUR ON OR ABOUT OCTOBER 27 RUMORS, APPARENTLY STIMULATED, BEGAN TO CIRCULATE FREELY THAT HE WOULD BE REMOVED. ARIAS WAS APPARENTLY INFORMED BY PRADO PALACE SOME TIME DURING PAST WEEKEND, BUT PROBABLY AFTER FRIDAY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING THAT CABANILLAS HAD TO BE RELIEVED. WHILE ARIAS DISCUSSED MATTER WITH FRANCO, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE HE MADE SERIOUS APPEAL TO SAVE CABANILLAS. CABANILLAS WAS INFORMED OF REMOVAL BY ARIAS DURING LUNCH ON MONDAY, OCT 28.

5. MINISTER OF INTERIOR GARCIA HERNANDEZ AND MINISTER OF PRESIDENCIA CARRO MARTINEZ OVER WEEKEND MADE UNAVAILING EFFORTS TO PERSUADE PRIME MINISTER ARIAS TO PERSUADE FRANCO TO RECONSIDER DISMISSAL. BUT HAVING FAILED THIS THEY GAVE IMMEDIATE PRIORITY TO PERSUADING ARIAS TO NOMINATE MODERATES RATHER THAN RIGHT-WINGERS AS REPLACEMENTS FOR CABANILLAS AND, "SUBSEQUENTLY, FOR FINANCE MINISTER BARRERA FOLLOWING HIS RESIGNATION OCTOBER 29." PRIME MINISTER'S AIDE SAID FIRMNESS DISPLAYED BY GARCIA HERNANDEZ AND CARRO IN SUPPORT OF CONTINUATION OF LIBERALIZATION PROGRAM HAD BEEN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN PREVENTING WAVE OF PROTEST RESIGNATIONS BY SOME LIBERAL CABINET MEMBERS AND BY SEVERAL KEY OFFICIALS AT

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SUBSECRETARY LEVEL IN MINISTRIES (HE MENTIONED RESIGNATION THREATS BY EDUCATION MINISTER CRUZ MARTINEZ, EDUCATION UNDER SECRETARY FEDERICO ZARAGOZA, INDUSTRY MINISTER UNDER SECRETARY LANDALINO LAVILLA AND PRESIDENCIA SUBSECRETARY LUIS JAUDENS).

5. HE BELIEVED THAT, WITH RESIGNATION OF BARRERA, WHICH WAS UNEXPECTED BUT WELCOME DIVIDEND TO RIGHT WING, THERE

WOULD BE NO OTHER MAJOR WITHDRAWALS AT CABINET LEVEL FOR TIME BEING. BARRERA HAD ENCOURAGED HIS PROTEGES, COMMERCE MINISTER FERNANDEZ CUESTA, INDUSTRY MINISTER SANTOS BLANCO AND NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL INSTITUTE (INI) DIRECTOR GENERAL FERNANDEZ ORDONEZ TO STAY ON, AND ONLY FERNANDEZ ORDONEZ WAS NOW DETERMINED TO LEAVE.

6. PRIME MINISTER'S AIDE BELIEVED THAT OUTCOME WAS SUCH THAT RIGHT COULD NOT CONSIDER THAT IT HAD WON REAL VICTORY OR THAT LIBERALIZATION HAD SUFFERED MAJOR DEFEAT. WHILE CABANILLAS AND BARRERA WERE OUT, THEIR REPLACEMENTS WERE MEN WHO WERE MODERATE TO LIBERAL AND AS COMMITTED TO LIBERALIZATION AS THOE THEY RELACED. NEW INFORMATION MINISTER HERRERA ESTEBAN WOULD FOLLOW MAIN LINES OF CABANILLAS POLICY OF PRESS FREEDOM, WHILE ELIMINATING MOST EGREGIOUS ABUSES. RIGHTISTS HAD LOBBYED HARD BU FAILED TO INSTALL THEIR CHOICES AS MINISTERS OF INFORMATION AND FINANCE, "HOJA DE LUNES" DIRECTOR LUCIO DEL ALAMO AND FORMER FINANCE MINISTER MONREAL LUQUE RESPECTIVELY. PRESIDENCIA SUSPECTED STRONGLY THAT CEREMONIES COMMEMORATING ANNIVERSARY OF FALANGE, AT WHICH NATIONAL COUNCILOR LABADIE OTERMIN HAD MADE WELL PUBLICIZED SPEECH IN EFFECT REPUDIATING LIBERALIZATION PROGRAM IN PRESENCE OF FRANCO AND PRINCE, HAD BEEN CAREFULLY STAGED BY MOVEMENT SECRETARY GENERAL UTRERA MOLINA. WHILE THIS HAD BEEN SYMBOLIC BLOW TO LIBERALS, OVERLOOKED WAS EQUALLY CAREFULLY PLANNED FACT THAT FRANCO AND PRICE HAD SHOWED UP AT CEREMONY IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES AND WITHOUT BLUE SHIRTS. MOREOVER, PRINCE HAD REFRAINED FROM APPLAUDING THROUGHOUT SPEECH AND FRANCO HAD APPLAUDED ONLY PERFUNCTORILY.

7. WHILE ALL WAS NOT LOST FOR LIBERALS AND LIBERALIZATION, HE CONCLUDED SHARP TURN TO THE RIGHT WAS ALREADY BEING ASSUMED BY APERTURISTAS AND SERIOUS DEMORALIZATION WOULD BE RESULT
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UNLESS SOME SIGNAL GIVEN RATHER SOON THAT LIBERALIZATION PROGRAM WOULD STILL GO FORWARD. HE WAS UNSURE WHAT SUCH A SIGN WOULD, THOUGH HE WAS AMONG ADVISERS NOW FAVORING IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT OF POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS LAW BY DECREE, THU SHORT CIRCUITING DRAWN OUT LEGISLATIVE PROCESS.

8. AIDE CONCLUDED BY STATING THAT ARIAS, WHILE HE HAD BEEN CREDITED WITH GREATER INDEPENDENCE AND WILLINGNESS TO ASSERT HIS OWN POLICY DURING SUMMER, IN FACT STILL REGARDED HIMSELF MORE AS ONE OF FRANCO'S MINISTERS RATHER TAN AS PRIME MINISTER IN HIS OWN RIGHT. HE NOTED THAT ARIAS' IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION, HAD ADMITTEDLY HIS OWN DIFFIDENCES AND SENSE OF LOYALTY TOWARD FRANCO, STATING THAT ONE OF HIS MOST URGENT DUTIES WAS TO TRY TO EDUCATE FRANCO TO THE FACT THAT CHANGES IN SPANISH SOCIETY MADE URGENT SUCH LIBERALIZATION MEASURES AS

POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS AND GREATER INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS,
BUT THAT HE HAD SO FAR NOT BEEN ABLE TO BRING HIMSELF TO
DO THIS.
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